

Decades later, when he finally answered the calling, he was the father of six children. Maxwell preached throughout Central Florida. He became minister of Orlando's St. John Missionary Baptist in 1964 and remained there until 2001.

A man who left school in the third grade, Maxwell obtained his high-school diploma later in life and would become known for his intellect and eloquence. That was his entry into the worlds of the humble and the mighty.

"He was not pretentious, even though he was very intelligent, very capable," Lynum said.

"He is going to be remembered as an advocate, but not just for the homeless. He worked in the community unselfishly."

Maxwell's life spanned the Ocoee race riot of 1920 to the civil-rights struggles of the 1960s to the election of blacks to public office.

And he remembered it all until the end.

"He was just a rich repository of African-American history in Central Florida," Bracy said. "He was a living legacy."

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, millions of Iraqis turned out to vote, and the fledgling democracy in Iraq took another step forward. I join all my colleagues in commending the Iraqi men and women for their action, and continue to thank the American men and women who are honorably serving abroad. Unfortunately, despite this important step, there still is a lack of leadership from the White House or from the Majority on the strategy that will bring our soldiers home victorious and bring them home soon.

And yet again, an opportunity for a meaningful debate on Iraq has failed to emerge. This debate must occur, and it must occur now. We see Iraqis voting, but we don't know when their governmental authority will take hold. We see the Iraqi army training, but we don't know when they will be ready to independently defend their nation. We see American troops serving and dying, but we don't know when they will return.

A strategy must be outlined, both to the American people and to the Iraqi people, which demonstrates a path to success. Rhetoric must be replaced with substance for such a strategy to develop. I believe that a concentrated effort will be necessary to urge the Iraqi people to take a lead in the war efforts and in the redevelopment efforts. Only by accelerating the transfer of responsibility to the Iraqis will they be ready to lead their nation toward a stronger democracy sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the President finally admitted that this war was based on several false pretenses and was supported by claims and arguments that were wrong. The President and the Majority must admit that this continued lack of planning on their part is most importantly a disservice to our soldiers, a disservice to Congress, and a disservice to the American people. If we do not learn from this mistake it will be repeated—and the consequence will be more loss of American lives. I again join others in calling for a debate on

Iraq, I call for a real strategy and a real plan for success, and I applaud the Iraqi people for their recent success in taking part in the democratic process.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING COLONEL TONY A. IMONDI

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that Colonel Tony A. Imondi is retiring after a long and distinguished career.

Colonel Imondi received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Aeronautics from Dowling College in 1975. After completing Officer Training School in 1976, he entered the Air Force. In 1981, he received a Master of Science Degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California.

In 1987, he joined the B-2 Stealth Bomber program and became a member of the B-2 Operational Test and Evaluation team and the Deputy Commander for Operations of the 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron at Edwards AFB, CA. In September 1991, he became Strategic Air Command's very first B-2 pilot. He subsequently moved to Whiteman AFB, MO, upon delivery of the first production B-2. He was appointed Deputy Commander of the 509th Operations Group at Whiteman AFB, MO, in December 1993.

After his promotion to Colonel, he attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair in Washington, DC. Following his distinguished graduation from ICAF, he served two years on the staff of the Secretary of Defense monitoring weapons testing before returning to Whiteman as the Commander of the 509th Operations Group in 1998.

In 2000, Colonel Imondi assumed duties as the Vice Commander of the 2nd Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. In September 2001, after the terrorist attacks on the United States, Colonel Imondi deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as Vice Commander of the 28th AEW, conducting combat missions in Afghanistan. In 2002, Colonel Imondi was assigned to the Directorate of Operations, Headquarters AETC. Colonel Imondi is a command pilot with more than 5,500 hours of flying experience in a wide variety of Air Force aircraft.

Colonel Imondi's awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Legion of Merit Award, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal and the Aerial Achievement Medal.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to Colonel Tony A. Imondi for his exception commitment to the United States Air Force and the United States of America.

PROVIDING THAT HAMAS AND OTHER TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS HELD BY PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors to this resolution for their good intentions in opposing terrorism and promoting peace in the Middle East. However, I am concerned that it could have the opposite effect.

I join my colleagues in reaffirming the United States' total commitment to the security of Israel. I condemn Hamas wholeheartedly as a terrorist group whose aims are the destruction of Israel and whose tactics of murder are inexcusable and unjustifiable. They commit horrific terror attacks against innocent Israelis and, in doing so, set back the aspirations of the Palestinian people to statehood.

Through its social service networks and other actions, Hamas has made itself an important political force in Palestinian society. Therefore, the reality is that the way to defeat Hamas begins at the ballot box. I agree with leading Israeli and American security experts who believe that any efforts to exclude Hamas will only backfire and strengthen them. Instead, we must recommit to working against Hamas—to marginalize them, weaken them, disarm them, contain them, strengthen their democratic opponents, limit their power and influence, and eventually eliminate them.

As General (Ret.) Ephraim Sneh—the former West Bank military governor and Deputy Israeli Defense Minister—wrote in the Washington Post, "Under current conditions in the Palestinian territories, especially given the Palestinian government's weakness, political containment should precede the dismantling of Hamas's military infrastructure. The urgent objective is to defeat it in the next parliamentary elections. Steps that could strengthen it in the elections should be strictly avoided. Attempts to postpone the elections yet again, or to prevent Hamas's participation, or Israeli disruption of the elections as 'punishment' for the participation of Hamas, will strengthen Hamas in the Palestinian street instead of weakening it."

I am concerned that this resolution sends a message that would be harmful to Israeli security and set back efforts to establish the vision of a democratic Palestinian state that lives side-by-side with Israel in peace. Therefore, I cannot support the resolution.

RECOGNIZING CENTENARIAN ELSIE JOHNSON OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elsie Johnson of Hernando County, Florida.

Elsie has done something that all of us strive for, but that very few of us I will ever accomplish, celebrate her 101st birthday.

Born April 17, 1904 in Coventry, Connecticut, Elsie Johnson attended school in